

Message Text

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51

ACTION OPIC-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 EB-12 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15

COME-00 AID-20 L-03 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIEP-03 /086 W

----- 116431

R 031245Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7031

UNCLAS TUNIS 6157

FOR NEA/AFN AND OPIC

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: OTRA, EINV, TS

SUBJECT: GOT EFFORTS ATTRACT US PRIVATE INVESTMENT

REF: TUNIS 5998

1. TIJANI CHELLI, PRESIDENT DIRECTOR GENERAL OF INVESTMENT PROMOTION AGENCY INFORMED EMBOFF THAT HE HAD RECEIVED TELEGRAM FROM TUNISIAN AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON, ALI HEDDA, PROPOSING (1) THAT TUNISIAN VISIT BY AMERICAN JOURNALISTS TO PUBLICIZE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES BE DELAYED UNTIL NOVEMBER AND (2) THAT VISIT TO US BY MINISTER OF PLAN AYARI (FORMER MIN ECONOMY) NOW OCCUR LATE JANUARY OR EARLY FEBRUARY. CHELLI INDICATED HE SOMEWHAT DISTURBED OVER PROPOSED DELAY AND SHORT PERIOD BETWEEN AYARI VISIT AND POSSIBLE ARAB INVESTMENT MISSION (AIM) LATE FEBRUARY. HE NOTED FOR FIRST TIME THAT NEW MIN ECONOMY LASRAM MAY HEAD TUNISIAN INVESTMENT DELEGATION TO US IN PLACE OF AYARI. IN COURSE OF DISCUSSION CHELLI SAID HE HAD RECOGNIZED MARGINAL UTILITY OF JOURNALIST DELEGATION AND FELT THAT DELAYING IT IN UNCERTAIN HOPE OF OBTAINING SEVERAL PROMINENT US MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES DID NOT JUSTIFY UPSETTING ESTABLISHED PROMOTION PROGRAM. AS RESULT HE WAS RECOMMENDING TO HEDDA THAT HE TRY PROCEED WITH JOURNALIST DELEGATION LATE OCTOBER OR EARLY NOVEMBER AND ARRANGE FOR AYARI (OR LASRAM) MINISTERIAL DELEGATION IN LATE NOVEMBER. HE RECOGNIZED THIS DELEGATION

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SHOULD NOT EXTEND STAY BEYOND DEC 15.

2. CHELLI FELT THERE WOULD BE NO CONFLICT BETWEEN JOURNALWST VISIT TO TUNIS AND AYARI VISIT TO US BUT FELT THAT IF AYARI VISIT OCCURRED IN JANUARY SHORTLY BEFORE AIM THERE WOULD BE AN INEVITABLE DUPLICATION OF EFFORT SINCE MANY FIRMS SEEN BY CHELLI WOULD BE PART OF AIM. HE WAS VERY PLEASED OVER OPIC PLANS PROCEED WITH AIM AND PLEDGED FULL API SUPPORT. HE RECOGNIZED THAT IF PROPOSED BIRD/ MIDDLETON VISIT OCCURRED AT SAME TIME AS JOURNALIST VISIT IT MIGHT HELP CREATE PUBLICITY.

3. WE GENERALLY AGREE WITH CHELLI VIEWS AND WELCOME HIS REALIZATION OF PROBABLE LIMITED UTILITY OF VISIT BY US JOURNALISTS AS MEANS OF ATTRACTING US INVESTMENT. WE SUGGEST DEPT/OPIC DISCUSS MATTER FURTHER WITH AMBASSADOR HEDDA. SINCE GOT CLEARLY CONVINCED VISIT BY AYARI IS IMPORTANT IN ENCOURAGING US PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN TUNISIA, WE BELIEVE EVERYTHING SHOULD BE DONE TO MAKE SUCH A VISIT PRACTICAL AND SUCCESSFUL. LATE FALL TIMING APPEARS MORE REASONABLE THAN MID WINTER, PARTICULARLY SO SOON BEFORE AIM.

4. WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR VIEWS WHICH WE COULD PASS ON TO CHELLI WHO IS MOST RECEPTIVE TO OUR SUGGESTIONS.
SEELYE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN INVESTMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974TUNIS06157
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740280-0053
From: TUNIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741074/aaaacjlm.tel
Line Count: 86
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION OPIC
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: TUNIS 5998
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: cunninfx
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 MAR 2002 by chappeld>; APPROVED <06 FEB 2003 by cunninfx>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOT EFFORTS ATTRACT US PRIVATE INVESTMENT
TAGS: OTRA, EINV, TS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005